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I appreciate the opportunity to participate again in the work of the World Food Council. I would also like to commend the secretariat for the quality and thoroughness of the papers it has prepared for this meeting.

I would like at the outset to reaffirm the conviction of my government that the World Food Council serves a very useful purpose in bringing together representatives at the ministerial level for a frank exchange of views and policies concerning the world food situation.

My country regards the World Food Council as the highest political body in the United Nations specifically concerned with world food problems and the means of overcoming them. We believe the World Food Council has a responsibility for helping to identify policy and program priorities and to coordinate actions in overcoming world hunger and malnutrition. The council can help generate the political will and provide the guidance needed to transform resolutions agreed to at the World Food Conference into effective and enduring solutions to world food problems.

It is clear that food production in many developing countries is not keeping pace with population growth and demand. Although food production in developing countries grew by about 3 percent in 1978, it fell short of the 4 percent target cited in the United Nations International Development Strategy. National food reserves in most developing countries were also well below desired levels. At the same time, the capacity of the non-Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) developing countries to import food has deteriorated. While the costs of oil and capital equipment keep rising, the value of many commodity exports has declined. According to the International Monetary Fund, the combined current account deficit for these countries in 1979 could reach an all-time high.

Remarks prepared for delivery by Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland before the World Food Council 5th Ministerial, Ottawa, Canada, September 4, 1979

The prospects for these countries, and particularly the low-income, food-deficit countries, are cause for serious concern. Although there have been significant international efforts to improve world food security in recent years, they have not proved adequate. The negotiations for a new International Wheat Agreement have been suspended. Food aid commitments have not reached the 10-million-ton target set by the World Food Conference. Meanwhile, upwards of a half billion people continue to be ill-fed and malnourished. Greater cooperation among nations is necessary if we are to reduce these numbers and to improve the opportunities for people to lead healthy, productive lives. This is a challenge we cannot shirk.

The Secretariat of the World Food Council has put before us a series of measures to meet this challenge. They focus on three major objectives:

- (1) Overcoming the constraints on increasing food production in developing countries,
- (2) Seeking more equitable distribution of food and thereby overcoming hunger and malnutrition, and
- (3) Attaining world food security and higher levels of food aid.

The United States has supported, and will continue to support, these objectives wholeheartedly. As recently as March of this year, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, in reviewing America's commitment to development in the Third World, recognized that assistance for Third World development was one of the critical issues of our time.

In setting forth the basic tenets of our approach to Third World development, Secretary Vance noted the importance of finding practical ways to improve peoples' lives, especially those near the edge of survival. He indicated that efforts to increase their supplies of food and energy were central to this approach.

At the Tokyo economic summit, we and other industrialized nations reaffirmed this commitment. The Tokyo declaration urges multilateral organizations to help developing countries prepare effective food sector strategies and build storage capacity for national food reserves. It calls for increased bilateral and multilateral aid for agricultural research and greater efforts to help these countries develop their human resources, with technical cooperation adapted to local conditions.

The U.S. goal in world food policy is to help developing countries improve their food production and distribution and make more food supplies available, particularly to the poor and nutritionally vulnerable. As long as necessary, we will work to meet short-term and emergency hunger needs through bilateral and multilateral food aid.

We believe that the poorest food deficit countries must expand their own production to satisfy more of their food needs. Most of the food produced in the world--85 to 90 percent of it--is consumed within the countries where it is produced. The expansion of world trade which will result from the multilateral trade negotiations will bring benefits to many, but domestic production will still supply the bulk of food in most countries.

Therefore, we strongly endorse the proposal that poor countries take the initiative in developing food strategy plans. Through the development of these plans, the agricultural sector will receive the high priority it deserves in each country. The United States, other developed countries, and international organizations can provide technical assistance in formulating these strategies. Once these plans are drafted the United States is prepared to join consortia organized by the World Bank or other international organizations to assist in implementing them.

We also support the multifaceted approach toward reducing hunger and malnutrition. Malnutrition is rooted in poverty and the inequitable distribution of food. National food strategies can provide a valuable framework for addressing the problems of hunger and malnutrition. To be effective, the strategies should include distribution and consumption plans, as well as programs for improving food production. The United States' experience in food distribution systems is particularly extensive. We stand ready to offer technical assistance, when requested, in this area.

Since the World Food Conference, the United States has participated actively in efforts to achieve world food security. We believe this objective is of preeminent importance. We regret that negotiations for a new International Wheat Agreement with realistic price bands and stock levels have not been successful. We would encourage those countries which have participated in the negotiations to resolve their differences so that the negotiations can resume. However, we must also pursue other initiatives if we are to achieve world food security.

First, we must complete the text of a new Food Aid Convention, and should do so this year. As you know, negotiations for a new text are virtually complete. A new Food Aid Convention will be an important step in assuring that sufficient food aid is available. We must also attain the 10-million-ton target for guaranteed annual food aid commitments. My country has pledged 4.47 million tons of cereals as our minimum annual commitment for food assistance during negotiations for a new Food Aid Convention. In March of this year we announced our intention to unilaterally honor that pledge. We urge other donors to implement the pledges they made during the negotiating sessions. Further, we urge all countries in a position to contribute to the convention--whether in cash or in kind--to do so. The effectiveness, as well as the quantity, of food aid can be greatly enhanced by supplementary financial and technical assistance.

Second, we should concentrate on the establishment of food security systems in the developing countries. This will require assistance in building food storage facilities, and in designing systems to maintain and distribute food reserves. We call on the World Bank and other multilateral financial institutions to further support such programs.

What is the United States doing to better the lot of the food-deficit developing countries? First of all, we are providing nearly two-thirds of the world's concessional food assistance. Our contributions this year will amount to \$1.4 billion, or almost 6.5 million tons of agricultural commodities. We have also eliminated acreage restrictions for next year to encourage our farmers to expand production so that we will have the food supplies necessary to meet our food aid commitments and to meet the pressures of increased market demand.

Almost half of our bilateral economic development assistance is devoted to agriculture and rural development. We will seek to channel even more of our food and development assistance in the years ahead to low-income developing countries which encourage higher rates of domestic food production, and more equitable distribution of food and agricultural resources, including land.

We share the mounting worldwide concern about the loss and degradation of croplands--trends that will impair our future ability to produce food. We have recently decided to increase our attention to soils protection in our foreign assistance programs. We will continue to support efforts by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) to combat degradation of croplands and encourage even greater national and international efforts to preserve these precious resources.

The United States contributes 25 percent of the resources of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). These resources are distributed to a network of research and training programs which help improve the technology of food production in developing countries. We also welcome the creation of a new international body named the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) within the CGIAR, and believe it can provide a useful link with research systems in developing countries. The existing network of international research centers has made a significant contribution toward improving food production in developing countries. We believe this network should be strengthened, especially in its activities with national research programs.

Finally, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of my department has helped Latin American countries develop their own programs for controlling plant and animal pests. Through APHIS, we contributed significantly to indigenous programs for eliminating hoof and mouth disease, screwworms, and Mediterranean fruit flies, which have severely damaged meat and fruit production in these countries.

On domestic food policy the United States has gone far beyond the basic concerns of how to manage farms and produce commodities. Our strategy for the 1980's embraces--to a greater extent than ever before--the broad challenges of marketing, distribution, processing, nutrition, and food assistance to the needy.

Nevertheless, U.S. domestic policy must still deal with production. We must produce at a high level to meet our own needs and those of our commercial customers and concessional importers. Our farmers will not increase their production unless they can be reasonably certain of getting a fair return above

their costs. Our own grain reserves have helped stabilize markets and provide food security, even in the absence of a new international wheat agreement. The farmer-owned reserve has enabled us to maintain production levels during periods of relatively low prices.

We and the entire world have benefited from this reserve. In less than two years, farmers placed 33 million metric tons of wheat and feed grains into the reserve. After prices rose this spring and summer, farmers decided to draw on the reserve to supply the increased demand. In three months (ending August 3), farmers redeemed 7.5 million tons and made them available in the market. By increasing supplies in a tight supply period, the reserve has worked to stabilize world trade as well as domestic prices.

As you know, President Carter has established a special Commission on World Hunger to study and propose ways the United States can further contribute to the elimination of hunger and malnutrition. The distinguished chairman of that commission, Ambassador Sol Linowitz, will report to us on the work of that body.

Individually and collectively, the countries assembled here have accomplished a good deal since the World Food Conference. Many countries have made notable contributions and advances. But we cannot be complacent. For the prospect remains that developing countries, particularly those that import both oil and grain, may again feel driven to the brink of economic disaster and human despair. Many developed countries, beset by new economic problems and government austerity, are constrained from making further commitments. Notwithstanding these constraints, the United States pledges to do its utmost, in cooperation with others, to meet the needs of the food deficit low-income countries.

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